

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 02836 250859Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /057 W
-----250940Z 034849 /20

R 250735Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4791
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2836

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJ: ZIA'S BANDWAGON GETS ROLLING

REF: DACCA 2735

1. THE NEWSPAPERS ARE NOW FILLED WITH NEWS OF THE REFERENDUM MAY 30. THE ELECTION COMMISSION (EC) HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ALL PREPARATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND THAT SOME 38 MILLION VOTERS HAVE BEEN REGISTERED, INCLUDING ABOUT 20 MILLION MALES AND 18 MILLION FEMALES. THEY WILL BE CASTING THEIR VOTES AT MORE THAN 20,000 POLLING STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE ELECTION COMMISSION HAS STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THE TURNOUT OF VOTERS IN A REFERENDUM IS OFTEN COMPARATIVELY LOW, ON THIS OCCASION THE EC "EXPECTS THAT THE TURNOUT WILL BE QUITE SATISFACTORY IN VIEW OF THE POPULAR IMAGE OF PRESIDENT MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN AND HIS PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE MASSES". AS IF TO ESTABLISH A VERY LOW COMPARISON SHOULD THE PARTICIPATION BE SLIGHT, THE EC REMINDED READERS THAT THE TURNOUT IN 1973 FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WAS 36 PERCENT. (IN THE "CRUCIAL" 1970 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN ELECTION IT WAS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DACCA 02836 250859Z

57 PERCENT, ABOUT THE SAME AS AN EARLIER "CRUCIAL" POLL IN 1954.)

2. SEVERAL MORE POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE ISSUED SUPPORT FOR ZIA IN THE PAST FEW DAYS. ON MAY 24, A JOINT STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BY FOUR LEADERS, INCLUDING FORMER CHIEF MINISTER ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN, BANGLADESH JATIYA LEAGUE; HAJI MOHAMMAD DANESH, JATIYA GANA MUKTI UNION; A. HALIM CHOWDHURY, UNITED PEOPLE'S

0-456; AND A.S.M. SOLAIMAN, KRISHAK SRAMIK PARTY. THIER LONG STATEMENT WAS DESIGNED TO GIVE SUPPORT TO ZIA ON HIS REFERENDUM IN ORDER THAT ZIA WOULD THEN BE COMMITTED TO ARRANGE NATIONAL ELECTIONS. AS THEIR STATEMENT SAID: "THE ANNOUNCEMENT...TO HOLD THE GENERAL ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER, 1978, IS A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS THE TRANSITION TO CONSUTITUATIONAL AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THE COUNTRY. WE TAKE IT AS A SOLEMN PLEDGE OF THE PRESIDENT...TO ESTABLISH DEMOCRATIC RULE. THE PRESIDENT, OF HIS OWN ACCORD, HAS OFFERED TO SEEK POPULAR CONFIDENCE IN HIM BY THE PROPOSED REFERENDUM AND BY DOING SO, HE HAS, IN FACT, COMMITTED HIMSELF TO THE OBLIGATION OF RESTORING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS. WE FEEL THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE REFERENDUM WITH THE HONEST BELIEF THAT AFTER THE REFERENDUM, THEIR LOST RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES SHALL BE RESTORED."

3. IN ADDITION TO THE EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FROM POLITICAL FIGURES AND OTHER PROMINENT LEADERS, EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO ESTABLISH CITIZENS' REFERENDUM COMMITTEES THROUGHOUT THE LOCAL AREAS. THE APPEAL, MADE BY LEADERS FROM THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY, IS BASED ON THE FEELING THAT THE CONSITUTIONAL CHANGES (IN THE DIRECTION OF ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES) ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ISSUE IN THE REFERENDUM. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, HEADED BY DR. MIR FAKRUZZAMAN, A FORMER VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SANTOSH, (THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGE OF THE LATE MAULANA BHASHANI), HAS CALLED ON ALL PEOPLE "TO CONSOLIDATE THIS MORAL VICOTRY FOR US." RALLIES WILL BE IN DACCA AND ELSEWHERE OVER THE WEEKEND, INCLUDING ONE BY THE FREEDOM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DACCA 02836 250859Z

FIGHTTTERS.

4. IN SPITE OF A HECTIC SPEAKING SCHEDULE AROUND THE COUNTRY, ZIA MANAGED TO CHANGE FROM HIS USUAL CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORM INTO A "PRESIDENTIAL" BUSINESS SUIT AND PERFORM SOME PROTOCOL DUTIES. HE WAS PHOTOGRAPHED MAY 23 ACCEPTING THE CREDENTIALS OF THE NEW AMBASSADOR FROM NORTH KOREA. ON THE SAME DAY, ZIA WAS ABLE ALSO TO MEET WITH THE VISITING YUGOSLAV DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DR. ANTON VRATUSA.

5. COMMENT: ONE IS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT ZIA IS ALMOST OMNIPRESENT, HAVING TIME BOTH TO CAMPAIGN IN THE FAR CORNERS OF THE COUNTRY AND TO MEET VISITING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES IN DACCA. HE HAS ALSO RECEIVED MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FROM VIRTUALLY EVERY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PARTY AND INTEREST GROUP, WITH THE IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS, AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (REFTEL), OF THE AWAMI AND DEMOCRATIC LEAGUES. THE ELECTION COMMISSION IS READY.

PERHAPS IN ANTICIPATION OF A LOW VOTER TURNOUT, IT IS PRE-
PARING TO CONTRAST THIS REFERENDUM WITH THE ELECTIONS
OF 1973, WHEN THE TURNOUT WAS FAIRLY LOW, RATHER THAN WITH
THE 1970 ELECTIONS, WHEN THE PARTICIPATION WAS MUCH HIGHER.
MASTERS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, REFERENDUMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DACCA02836
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770186-0627
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770521/aaaaaroc.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a235d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 DACCA 2735
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2382056
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZIA'S BANDWAGON GETS ROLLING
TAGS: PINT, BG, (ZIA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a235d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009